

Center Creek Reservoirs.....by LeRoy G. Sweat.

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In the early spring, I may have been 8 or 9 years old, I rode my horse bare back along with Alex Allison and Dad (Orvel Sweat) up to the #1 reservoir to close it down to catch the spring water. In those days the way to close and open the head gate was on a catwalk out in the reservoirs, with a chain from the catwalk down to the lid on the pipe through the dam, if closed in the fall and the water filling in the reservoir. The ice would freeze to the chain and as the water level raised so would the chain on the outlet and the water was turned out. George Olsen, Alex Allison and Orvel Sweat came up with an idea. They put a 1 ½ inch pipe all the way through the pipe outlet to a lid hinged on the inside of the reservoir to the pipe. With a threaded bolt to the back outside of the reservoir to open and close as needed when using the water.

Dad (Orvel) took care of filling the reservoir for years. One spring at #2 reservoir the beaver had plugged the outlet pipe and the water was 4 ½ feet deep, backed up. Dad tried to open it up but the chain to the lid broke, so the only thing left to do was get in the ice cold water up to my chest and dig the beaver dam out to lower the water level and to repair the chain so we could close it down to be filled for summer watering. Dad was in charge of the work assignments in the fall of the year. Each stock holder had so much work to do for his share of the water. With teams and scrapers and plow. The inside of the reservoir was widened. 1939 was the last year teams were used. Dean Sweat had Wade Cummings team working for Wade. I used Dad's team for him, he worked for J.W. Clyde. Uncle Delbert Sweat worked for Grandpa (Louis) Sweat, Wren Giles for his Dad Albert Giles, LaVel Peterson for his self. He plowed the ground up. Uncle Otis was there also. When at #2 working one evening the fellows said we will take care of your team if you and Dean go get us some Venison. Dad had a World War I rifle, a 30-40 Kreg. After the war, the Heber Drug store got a number of the used rifles in and sold them for \$7.50 each. Dad's still had the army sight on.

Dean and I went up to #3 reservoir then back towards Turner Canyon, it was now sundown. Dean was just a little ways below me. I saw a small deer out ahead of us. I pulled down on it, but the sights were so fine and near dark, I couldn't tell for sure. I raised the gun up in the air above the line of the hills, got in the sights, brought it down until I could see the deer and shot. Dean called, "Did you get it?" I said "Yes it's right here." He said "Yes, here it is below me," I said "No, I got it here". I had shot through both of them standing together. We worked #1 and #2 reservoirs that year. After that year the work was done with a bulldozer by Lloyd's, Blackey Rothlesburger and Jess Knottel.

While Dad (Orvel) was in charge of filling the reservoirs one spring, the ditch from Crooked Creek broke, we fixed the break by cutting green aspen brush and dirt to make a bank on the ditch.

I took over the job from Dad to fill the reservoirs for the company in the 1960's. Phil my son took the job over from me in year 2000.

Reservoir #3....One spring as I was checking the reservoirs on my horses I could see some water coming out from under a snow bank, I rode over to see what was happening. My horse went in up to his knees in mud and water. I went on up to the reservoir. It was ½ full. I turned off the water coming into the reservoir, watched closely for a few days until the water seep stopped then I could see a hole on the inside of the reservoir. That fall "Blacky" (Mr. Rothlesburger) with his bulldozer and I with bags of secrete, plugged the hole and put some black plastic over the area and covered it with dirt. It has never leaked again.

One time Dad (Orvel) and I (LeRoy) were up above #3 reservoir on Christensen's ground. He said I'll show you where #4 reservoir is, so we rode up a ways above #3 until we came to a small draw. The aspen have grown back in the bottom of the reservoir. I can't remember it being used.

#2 Reservoir broke years ago. I don't know when.

In 1993 Lowell Ryan and I put a new gate on #5 reservoir, the old pipe we joined onto was not good.

#1 ReservoirOn the 14th of May, 1973, my wife Virginia and I checked the reservoirs on our saddle horses, going across each dam, the reservoirs being full. On the afternoon of the 16th of May, Vir and Ellen Peterson's son came down from the hills saying a reservoir had broken. Phil and I rushed up to the first crossing. Here came the water. We went home, called Floyd Witt the sheriff, he called the Heber Airport but no one was there. He got a plane out of Salt Lake. I went to the airport, went with them. We flew up the canyon to see if was #1. It was near the center of the dam where it was broken. As we flew back to Heber, I told them I had a roll of net wire near the dam. By taking two dry aspen, fastening the tips together, putting the net wire across on them and put plastic in front at the center with two men on each side of the break. Throw a rope to the other man, we could float the poles and wire across. The plastic could stop most of the water. Doyle and I went up on our horses, got every thing ready, but no one came that had promised to come right up. About midnight no one came so we rode back home about 2:30 A.M. Long before day light we had more help. We went up on our horses and did the job, saving about 1/3 of the water. We had a hard time later that I remember finding the rod to open the gate for the water we had saved. Pat Qualey with his backhoe finally found it. We had a jack to open it up. To repair the dam the state required a new cast iron pipe be put through the dam with a valve on the back side of the dam. To me that wasn't as safe as what we had. Stopping the water on the end of the pipe inside of the dam, rather than having the water in the pipe clear through the dam with a valve there, but they wouldn't think of it. They put the valve on the end of the pipe repairing the dam. The State had repair men dampen the soil with a layer of dry cement mixed and rolled it down immediately. John Sunbloom was our inspector and he recorded it just the way it went in. Once they didn't get it rolled down as they should have and it went on the report that way.

Charlie Barnes had a small reservoir up behind the dugway. The Creek Company gave him 5 shares for creek water for his reservoir. When Curtis Muir was president he had more work done on the dam. There is some water seeping under the dam and on the old road. Watching it as it goes in and when the seeping starts we thought it was coming from the Northeast side. Uncle Otis with his tractor, scraped that part but it didn't do any good. The seeping on the north starts when it is about 10 feet from being full. It must be the rocky point towards the dugway. The State said if we filled it last in the spring and used it first we could use it.

The Bald knoll Reservoir ... Lowell Ryan and I with his backhoe, piled and burnt dead wood and replaced the head gate in the reservoir in 1993. At that time the existing pipe through the dam was in very poor condition. Since then I have questioned it's safety. Some three years ago, in the winter I became very concerned about it's safety. Talking with Allan Sweat about my concern of it. He had Phil and I on snowmobiles go up and open the gate on it. There was 8 feet of snow then. Phil shoveled down where we thought the gate my be. After digging down it wasn't there. I had cleaned the snow off the wheel at the back, so I tapped on the on the rod through the dam, he could hear it. He was just off about three feet. I had made a screen to keep the beavers from damning off the end of the pipe. We installed that. Last year (2000) I talked to a State dam man about how to repair the pipe. He told me of a company in Salt Lake that made a heavy plastic liner for such a thing. That Ben Lindsay had used in Lake Creek. I talked with Allen Sweat then and he said he would look into it. I think if we did the same with #3 reservoir our reservoirs would be in top shape.

John A. Thomas on June 15th, 1898 won a decree in Center Creek water and irrigation to water 18 acres up to the 15th of June each year.

The next Easter after we had the cabin at the #2 reservoir, Ann and Sharon wanted to go to the cabin for Easter. We drove up to the dugway, then walked on the snow over to the cabin, had lunch and as we walked back out, I sighted around the hill, off the end of our ditch to our little reservoir and said. "By making a small cut on the top of the ridge, we could take the creek water over into #1. I talked to some of the stock holders, most of them said if it would go the old timers would have done it. I insisted we survey it. Curtis Muir was President and it went over without a cut on the ridge. Since then we have had #1 full by the end of March.

Mary Ellen Lindsay Reservoir

Located in Center Creek (Heber, Utah) just east of the Charlie Barnes farm (about 4400 East 2400 South) on the west side of the J.W. Clyde farm. It was used in the spring and if a rain came, they didn't need the water for irrigation, instead of losing that water it was stored in this small reservoir. Being close to some homes, and like young boys do, they built a small raft to play on the water. It was thought that the Barnes boy had a sun stroke and fell off the raft and drown. Jack Will Allison was a very good swimmer and dove down into the reservoir in search of the boy. It was said that about the third dive, he was under the water so long some feared he had been drown, but he came up with the boys body. I understand that it was never used again. Part of the old damn is still there today. (Year 2001)

List of Center Creek Reservoirs =
#1

- LeRoy G Sweet

#2

Charles Barnes small Reservoir
Bald Knoll